

## WOMEN IN GOD'S CHURCH

=====

by Rhoda Foust

I, and I'm sure, the majority of women in the church, are perfectly content not to be put into the heavy responsibility of being a speaker in front of congregations in the church. Never-the-less, there are some scriptures that refer directly to women in the church, which are not being dealt with in light of Bible reference Conc. and the original Greek usage of certain words.

Paul, in establishing order in the early church, and in the context of confusion that was developing in the Gentile church services in Corinth said, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saidth the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."  
1Cor. 14:34-35

Researching this topic in Strong's Conc., I find the word "speak" as used here, in the orig. Greek has nothing to do with speaking under inspiration, or of prophesying. The word used is laleo = defined: to speak, talk, preach, etc, but then an additional reference is given to another number which defines this word in this particular usage, and says: laleo = an extended or random harangue, ask, bid, boast, call, etc. This then, was not a direct reference by Paul toward an inspired female speaker, or one speaking in an orderly fashion, but women who were randomly haranguing, questioning and interrupting the order of services to quarrel and disorderly discuss doctrines of the church.

This is further attested to in Haley's Bible Handbook: "Paul here forbids, (1Cor.14:34) what he seems to allow in 1Cor 11:5. There must have been some local circumstances, unknown to us, that gave point to these instructions. Possibly some very bold women, converted temple prostitutes maybe, were putting themselves forward...."

1Tim. 2:11-12 Paul says: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. I do not permit a woman to teach, nor usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence..."

Strong's Conc.: a)silence = desist from bustle and language. b) silent = close, secret, hold peace. c) subjection = to subject one's self to obey. d) teach = teach, (as to) learn. e) usurp = and authority = (same def. given for both words) to act of oneself, to dominate.

These words show a woman should learn without noisome bustling and/or chatter (talking), and refrain from interrupting while learning. She should not dominate, or take to herself authority over a man who has authority. Could this scripture not equally apply to anyone--man, as well as women--who does not have a position of authority? It clearly instructs women of non-authority not to "usurp" (take of one's self the authority) over one who already has authority.

So--according to the original Greek usage, Paul--in both places--is simply telling the unruly, noisy, and rude Gentile women to be quiet and listen to those men who had the authority to teach, not haranguing, interrupting, asking questions in a disorganized way. He was telling them: if they did not understand, they were to wait until they got home and ask their husbands (who were also in attendance) to explain what had been taught.

It makes no sense at all for a woman who has been a Bible student for many years, converted and growing by the power of God's Holy Spirit, to go home and ask her unconverted (and possibly hostile) husband questions about spiritual matters. Paul could not have been speaking to inspired women or women with unconverted mates! It was (is) only to women who try to cause discord or disruption that Paul addresses in 1Cor. 14:34

edited 2013